

# Rikki Tikki Tavi

“While You Read”  
Study Guide Questions



# 1. How did Rikki Tikki likely get his name?

- His name is an example of onomatopoeia; it comes from his war cry (the sound he makes to warn others that he is angry).





# 1. How, when and where did Rikki-tikki meet Teddy's family?

- A summer flood washed Rikki away from the burrow he lived in with his family.
- Teddy and his family found Rikki laying in the hot sun on the middle of a garden path.
- They thought Rikki was dead at first.



### 3. Why wasn't Teddy's father concerned about Rikk-tikki sleeping so close to Teddy at night?

- Because Teddy's dad knew that a mongoose would be a great protector and could kill any harmful snakes (that were common for the area they lived in).
- “better than a bloodhound”





## 5. Why were Darzee and his wife so upset when we (the readers) first meet them?

- Because one of their babies fell out of the nest yesterday and Nag ate him.



## 6. What is a grown mongoose's "business in life", according to how Rikki-tikki had been brought-up?

- "He knew that all a grown mongoose's business in life was to fight and eat snakes" (p 15)





7. Use context clues to predict and identify the meaning of the word “fledglings” as it’s used on the bottom of page 15: “...marks or no marks, do you think it is right for you to eat fledglings out of a nest?”

- Fledglings= young bird that has recently become capable of flight. (Or, somebody inexperienced.)



## 8. What did Darzee do that helped Rikki-tikki but angered Nag so greatly? Explain.

- Darzee screamed “Behind you! Look behind you!” which warned Rikki-tikki just in time and prevented Nagaina from successfully being able to sneak up on & bite Rikki.





9. “When a snake misses its stroke, it never says anything or gives any sign of what it means to do next” (p 15). Up to this point in the story, assess Nag and Nagaina’s hunting skills. Are they *really* dangerous predators to most animals in the forest? To humans? To Rikki-tikki?



**10. If a “magic cure” isn’t what *really* saves a mongoose from a snake’s attack, what does?**

1. Quickness of eye
2. Quickness of foot.



# 11. Why is Karait, the dusty brown snakeling, more harmful to people than a cobra?

- His bite is as dangerous as a cobras, but people don't notice him as quickly or take him as seriously b/c he doesn't LOOK as intimidating as a cobra.
- Also, due to the fact that he's smaller, he can turn more quickly, and can strike faster.

**12. Use context clues to predict and identify the meaning of the word gait on the bottom of page 16: “Rikki-tikki danced up to Karait with the peculiar rocking, swaying motion that he had inherited from his family. It looks very funny, but it is so perfectly balanced a gait that you can fly off from it at any angle you please...”**

- **Gait = a way of walking, running or moving along on foot.**



**13. Why did Rikki-tikki decide *not* to eat Karait like his family's dinner custom after all? What does this tell you about Rikki-tikki (indirect characterization)?**

- **“A full meal makes a slow mongoose”**
- **It shows that he's smart and cautious.**

## 14. What clues imply that Chuchandra is a “scaredy-cat”

- Seems “jumpy”
- Scared of Rikki when he sees/hears him
- Too scared to walk through center of the room
- Paranoid that Nag or Nagaina might attack *him* in the dark, thinking Chuchundra is Rikki.



**15. Rikki-tikki overhears Nag and Nagaila's plan on page 17. Why do they want to get rid of Teddy and his family? How do they plan to do this?**

- They want to be able to rule the entire garden & enough room for their babies who are about to hatch.
- They plan to kill Teddy's family—Nagaina wants to kill Rikki-tikki too, but Nag convinces her that if they kill the family, Rikki-tikki will naturally leave on his own.

# **16. Ultimately, what and who is responsible for killing Nag? Explain.**

- Rikki-tikki was prepared to fight till death, but in doing so, he and Nag were knocking over bathroom items which woke up the family.
- Ultimately, Teddy's father was responsible for killing Nag by firing both barrels of his shotgun (p 18)



**17. Although Nag is dead, what does Rikki-tikki realize still needs to be done/taken care of before the conflict can be resolved?**

- Nag & Nagaina's eggs!!!!**

# 18. How are Darzee and his wife different from one another, as displayed on page 20?

- Darzee is celebrating too prematurely— He's not very bright. He's only realizing that the problem that is solved is "short-term" and not realizing that a more long-term problem exists (the eggs and Nagain)
- Darzee's wife, on the other hand, is much better at planning and seeing the "big picture". She's smart and realizes the importance of helping Rikki-tikki. She's even clever enough to be able to go along with the plan to pretend her wing is injured to distract Nagaina while Rikki-tikki gets to her eggs.



# **19. What role did Darzee's wife play in saving Teddy's life and helping to kill Nagaina?**

- She pretends her wing is broken/injured so that Nagaina will think he's an "easy prey" and he will go after her. Meanwhile, Rikki-tikki will have a chance to go after her & Nag's eggs!
- She also warns Rikki when Nagaina turned back towards the house to hurt the family.

## **20. How did Rikki-tikki distract Nagaina from holding Teddy's family "hostage" at the table on page 21?**

- Rikki-tikki held Nagaina's last remaining egg "hostage" to get her attention.



**21. The battle between Rikki-tikki and Nagaina is the climax even though much of it is left to our imagination (we don't follow them underground to know exactly what takes place down there). Defend the author's decision to still refer to this part of the story as the climax.**

**Describe the mood at the end of the story. (How are the readers intended to feel?)**

- Happy
- Relieved
- Confident
- Like they lived “happily ever after”.
- All is right in the world.